

BLUE GRASS BLADE

A. T. Parker
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WE AIM TO CUT DOWN ERROR AND ESTABLISH TRUTH.

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RELIGION

ITS INCEPTION LAY IN AN IGNORANT WORSHIP OF SEX

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(By Theodore Schroeder.)

Every definition of religion is resolvable into this: Religion is man's conception of his relation to those among the supposed objects of his dependence, to which his relations seem so mysterious that he deems his acquaintance with them due to transcendental experiences. Man's gods are his conception of such objects of dependence, which, in turn, involve his explanations of the mystery. Symbolism and institutionalism in religion are but man's imperfect observations of these concepts. Idolatry is the concept symbolized, and is developed by a process of gradual final consecration, and a belief in its being an incarnation of the deity.

The God idea, like the idea of the good and the beautiful, is a mere abstraction, not an objective reality cognizable to a man as such, but wholly, solely and unalterably subjective, finding its only justification in the feelings of man, though seldom so understood. The history of religion is, therefore, but a record of man's objective manifestations of such subjective states. Thus viewed, the study of religious phenomena is essentially a branch of psychology, and the methods of material science, adjusted to the order and relations of objective phenomena, are applicable so long as we are examining the religion of others. The scientist must study the manifestations of religion as the alienist studies the utterance of insane, namely: as a means of classification, and for the discovery of causal conditions within, as well as without, the individual.

Variety of religions is the product of evolution, a part of universal evolution. The difference between the individual worshipfulness of some primitive peoples and our modern, highly-diversified, religious organizations, only exemplifies the law of evolution, which is ever a transition "from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity."

In criticism of Spencer, Lang, Taylor and others, in their efforts to interpret religion in terms of the law of evolution, it has been justly said: "However interesting these (their) theories may be, however much light they may shed upon the religious life of primitive and civilized peoples, the question, 'How did primitive man obtain conceptions that we call religious?' is not solved."

However, by applying the law of evolution to the known facts, we may be able to retrace the evolutionary process to the beginning of religion, and having thus found the initial object of worship, we are in a better situation to answer the inquiries as to how, whence and why man acquired religious experiences and concepts.

If we desire to retrace the evolutionary process of religion to their origin, we begin by arranging the objects of worship according to their evolutionary chronology. This is accomplished by classifying them as relatively close to or far evolved from the beginnings, according to the degree of complexity implied in the religious concepts, and the degree of conscious knowledge of man's relationship to his environment, which is implied from his choice of the objects of worship.

Since continuing evolution is conditioned upon an ever widening mental horizon, that religion is nearest the primal deviation from the non-religious which implies the least knowledge of environment. Because the worship of an infinite, purposeful, divine imminence implies a wider knowledge of the world and the universe, than does the worship of isolated natural phenomena, therefore theism, as now defined, is conclusively proven to be a later evolutionary development than the worship of a mountain or of lightning. The first among the religions of which we have knowledge must be that one which implies the least or no conscious acquaintance with the objective,

Judged by that test, it follows beyond all reasonable doubt that sex-worship must have been the very first form of our known religions, since the conditions of its development are wholly within each individual.

When unconscious automatism was transforming to human self-consciousness, beyond all doubt one of its very first cognitions must have been the primal impulse that makes for progeny an accompaniment of sex-ecstasy. This is so for many reasons, and among them the conspicuous changes and periodicity of its manifestations, would compel an attention which a more uniform activity would escape. Then was the age of racial adolescence. Savages and children animate all things with a psychic life, and ascribe to a special volition all activities which excite their sorrow, joy, hope or fear. It is a necessary inference that in primitive man this tendency was at least as pronounced as in present-day children.

Becoming conscious that sex-impulse was uncontrollable by its own act of volition, man naturally assumed that the generative organs had a psychic life of their own, by which they knew the how and why of their own activity, seen to be so well adjusted to the end of procreation. Necessary, such a man ascribed the phenomena of sex-ecstasy and sex-function to an intelligence not his own. Because he had not yet become conscious of his relation to his environment, he naturally gave that intelligence a local habitation within the virile member. As late as 1729, I find a Christian clergyman writing of it as the "receptacle of a manly soul."

Phallic worship was inevitable. To primitive man in racial adolescence the sexual mechanism and functioning is the first conscious, the greatest, and almost the only intense joy of his experience; the first visible and most immediate course of life, the first object of conscious dependence; the first mystery presented to consciousness demanding solution and inspiring awe; the first sense perceived associate of his highest, his deepest and almost his only hopes, longings and joys, as well as the instrumentality of their realization.

It was unavoidable that the solemn awe of sex-mystery, the seeming transcendence of sex-ecstasy, and the predominance of a conscious-dependence upon sex for joy and life, all combined with the supposed intelligence ascribed to the sex-organs, would fuse into a worshipful reverence of the phallus, as the original, objective intelligent and ultimate source of all that to primitive man was worth having. In the nature of things, therefore, these elements made sex-worship the first religion, and they are the essentials of all religion, even to this day. A growing knowledge has caused us often to change our opinions as to the status of that other intelligence which is believed to control our destiny, but the essence is still the same. When we shall have solved the mystery of generation, abolished the awe of ignorance, and no longer experience the ecstasy of love, religion will have ceased to be. In these considerations we find a complete answer to the question, "How did primitive man become religious?"

Prehistoric archaeology has also contributed evidence to show that phallic worship is the oldest religion. A modern writer has this to say about our theme: "There appears to be a chance of this (phallic) worship being claimed for a very early period in the history of the human race. It has been recently stated in the *Moniteur* that in the province of Venice in Italy, excavations in a bone cave have brought to light, beneath ten feet of stalagmite, bones of animals mostly posttertiary, of the usual description found in such places, flint implements, with a need-

le of bone having an eye and point, and a plate of an argillaceous compound on which was scratched a rude drawing of a phallus."

There can be no objectivation of a concept as in a drawing, until man has become self-conscious. It, therefore, follows from the very nature of our thinking process, that man could not make a drawing of the phallus until after he had become definitely self-conscious of some of the phenomena of sexuality. Since with the genesis of such a consciousness the primal phallicism must have come into being, it follows that the drawing above referred to was made after the beginning and probably because of sex-worship. This easily fixes the existence of phallic religion, ages anterior to the known existence of every other kind of religious manifestation.

Since the course of evolution is marked by a change "from incoherent" (Continued on Page 4.)

PREACHER

SUFFERING FROM ACUTE BUG-HOUSE

ALTHOUGH A HOUSETOP EVANGELIST HE IS A GRADUATE OF UNDERGROUND MORALITY AND WANTS A POLITICAL JOB TO GO ALONG WITH HIS PULPIT.

(By John F. Clarke.)

York, Sept. 21.—From the roofs of York will go forth a challenge to the voters of this city. It will be an appeal for their support for the office for Mayor to be made by Rev. Jacob Kurtz, known as the "house-top evangelist," by reason of the fact that he is wont to make his impassioned pleas for morality and virtue and goodness from lofty elevations. Mr. Kurtz has figured in many reform movements, and it is given out that he shortly will announce his independent candidacy for the city's chief office.

If elected, Kurtz says, he will introduce many reforms. When persons are arrested for breaking the peace or immoral conduct, he will put them in his Sunday-school class. In that way he will have an opportunity to lecture them.

It takes all kinds of dam fools to make a world. Mr. Kurtz is suffering with acute bug-house dementia. Any man of sense should know that almost every criminal in the land is trained in Christian ethics.

House-top evangelists, as a rule graduate in underground morality. Jesus Christ said that a malefactor should be pardoned 490 times (70 times 7). This puts the Christian malefactor upon Easy street so far as conscience goes.

Some Christians go the limit, knowing that Christ can not improve them until the 491 crime is recorded. There is one notable exception, the sin against the Holy Ghost. One "sin" against that ethereal humbug furnishes a season ticket for Paine's eternal fireworks.

The refusal to recognize Mr. H. G. is not tolerated by Jesus Christ and his crowd. Christ's "daddy" is a perplexing problem.

That Joseph was forestalled with his girl bride, the account in Matthew leaves no room for doubt.

No one saw the H. G. on his nocturnal (?) visit, and the Chief Butler had no recollection of admitting any one resembling H. G. to Mary's apartments.

Still, Mary "was with child" and Joseph was going to "put her away" and write her a bill of divorcement out of hand.

Just here appears the most interesting witness in all history.

"An angel of the Lord appeared to Joe in a dream, and told Joe to gird up his loins of faith and believe mightily, Joe 'done so'."

That Joe should have been an "easy-mark" is not so surprising, but that millions of Christians should have banked upon Joe's easy faith is a little more than remarkable. Mary's character was "saved" by a process that would not "go" in a single Christian household in Christendom. As a matter of fact, Mary existed only in the futile imagination of some crazy writer and the story was legendary to the core, but a vast and expensive propaganda has kept fanning the coals of romance and trying to make

them blaze with fact. Whatever a man "believes" is "fact" to him.

Let us return to Rev. Kurtz. He makes pleas from lofty stations. I would recommend Mr. Kurtz to go to the pinnacle of Pike's Peak and air his opinions.

Perhaps the eagles might get higher notions and strive and live near Heaven. The still-unshot Teddy Bears would join his Sunday-School Class. The wild burros of the plains would be the most appropriate classmates for the house-top evangelist. Baalam imbibed some wisdom from one of these once upon a time (see sacred history.)

INDUSTRY REWARD.

(By D. Webster Groh.)

From a crooked sprout, grows a crooked tree,
And lazy youths, lazy men will be,
For who shirked work, in his youthful days,
Will evade man's work in ten thousand ways.

As the blacksmith's arm grows big and strong,
By his daily hammering, hard and long,
So all muscles grow, by their exercise,
Developing heart, brain and nerve likewise.

As the trotting horse, to win the race,
Must trot off before, at a rapid pace,
His trotting muscles to develop thus,
Else he's not e'en fit for a hearse or "bus."

So the child, to work, must early be trained,
Else his muscles are weak, and easily strained,
And his heart-beats faint, and his will-power weak,
He'll think very slow, and his memory leak.

Lack of exercise grows a pigmy breed,
Small in muscle, bone, heart, mind and creed,
Whose foolish faddists, so dread work themselves,
That they e'en get sick, if another delves.

Against "child labor" they whine and cry,
They want "child idleness" so by and by,
All men as lazy as themselves will grow,
And laziness won't then, disgrace them so.

But who won't work will lose his health,
His vim, brain, muscle, and also his wealth,
His limbs, head, chest and stomach will ache,
His eyes will grow dim and his nerves all a-shake.

For cheat, though you may, your "green" fellow man,
You can't cheat old Nature, by any shrewd plan,
And idlers, who waste all their seed-time away,
May well die, unmixed, most any fine day.

Then teach growing youths useful industry now,
So, to nature's decree they smiling bow,
Rejoicing in labor, well done, while they sing:
"Prosperity, plenty, and health it will bring."

And faddists that hoot, like lone owls on dead limbs,
While the sunlight of science their eyesight bedims,
Like the owls should creep back, in some old rotten tree,
Till "dark ages" return, if ever that be.

WILL SOMEBODY HELP?

Hagerstown, Md., Sept. 19, '07.

Dear Brother Hughes:

I want you or any one of the Blade contributors to kindly compose a line or two, suitable for the headstone of my deceased husband who was a Freethinker and admirer of the Blade and its writers. With best wishes,
MRS. C. W. FARBER.

FINAL

JOURNEY TO THE GRAVE

There is Always a Desire in Man for a Change, But Who Can Tell

What That Change Will Be? The Less Wisdom

the Greater the Limitation of the Mind

A FEW REFLECTIONS UPON AN IMPORTANT SUBJECT.

(By Channing Severance.)

In all ages of the world mortal man has been filled with a spirit of unrest, and he has gone to both religion and philosophy to find relief from the persistent activity of mental forces. For the man with brains enough to insure a vigorous and active mind, there has never been rest, and it can never be found until his body has been conigned to the grave or dissipated into its original elements by the fires of the crematory.

There is an intellectual craving for knowledge that can never be satisfied, and every conceivable line of thought is pursued with the only result that it whets the appetite for more. No matter what man does, there is ever and always a desire within him for change and excitement, and the monotony of life drives him to excesses in various ways as he strives to escape satiety, discontent and unrest. He rides first one hobby and then another, and jumps from this thing to that, always seeking by so doing to reach a stall of satisfaction and contentment; but he was not born to find it or be contented, as well might the leaves upon the tree expect to remain motionless when the wind blows, as for the mortal man to anticipate a time when his mind will

not be in a state of unsatisfied activity because of his environments and their influence thereon. His life is always full of doubt and uncertainty and trouble of some kind is ever present, and yet the imagination is projected into the future to find more and increase his torments. He lives at all times more in the past or in the future than the present, and with hope and anticipation always in alternation with doubt and despair, he plods his weary way to the final end of all mankind. This has ever been the experience of our species; and reasoning from what has been and what now is, there is no room to suppose it will ever be otherwise. From the earliest records left us in the remote past, we find that our predecessors on the journey of life have found existence unsatisfactory, and out of the depths of antiquity come such expressions as these: My soul is weary of life: I will speak in the bitterness of my soul "Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble." Thus spoke our old friend Job thousands of years ago, and Buddha was driven into the solitude of the wilderness by his thoughts, and the effort to change them. To obtain peace of mind he attempted to kill natural desires, and in proportion as he suppressed them he claimed he found peace and tranquility.

But to live in that manner is to war continually against nature, for desires are stubborn things and deeply implanted in man's being. Existence under such conditions can claim but little improvement, and yet many have resorted to it and both preached and practiced self-denial and the subjugation of the physical attributes. But do what he will man cannot escape from his thoughts, and when he was created a thinking being, both his heaven and his hell were insured as P. B. Randolph affirmed. It is his inability to suspend the action of thought, that drives man to drugs, drink, insanity and suicide. Said Solomon, "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing;" and again, "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun," and all is vanity and vexation of spirit." This is the testimony of a wise and wealthy man after the greater part of his life had been spent. It was not the hasty conclusion of inexperience and early manhood, but of old age, when opinions have value. He further affirmed, that, "in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." This is a remark-

able statement to make, but is undoubtedly true. The less wisdom one has the greater the limitation of the mind, and in this fact we see how bliss and ignorance have a natural affinity. Wisdom brings its penalties because it opens to thought many avenues that lead to dissatisfaction and sorrow; for when the realities of life are seen separate and distinct from its delusions and illusions, we are disenchanted in many ways and begin to know that many pleasant beliefs are baseless, and we exist in a world full of doubt, uncertainty and insecurity.

The man who thinks and acquires knowledge will find himself separated from much that has hitherto given him pleasure, for in youth he had many golden dreams, and joyful anticipations that years of accumulated knowledge never failed to dissipate and destroy. The world has produced few men that equaled in wisdom and knowledge the great Voltaire, and yet his words were these near the close of life: "I have consumed about 40 years of my pilgrimage in two or three corners of the world, seeking the philosopher's stone called truth. I have consulted all the depths of antiquity, x x x x and I still remain in ignorance. After the assertions of the most ancient philosophers which I have approached as nearly as possible, what remains to us? A chaos of doubts and chimeras."

All the wisdom that mortal man has or can acquire, seems to increase his doubts and fill him with this conviction; that outside and beyond phenomena apparent to his senses, he is forever limited in his investigations. It is true he has sent his imagination back of phenomena and constructed pleasing beliefs, and in them has found some consolation for his restless mind; but when reason gets active and disturbs these faiths in the unseen doubts and chimeras return like the ebb of the tide. To find rest in faith that transcends phenomena is a possibility to minds that rise above mediocrity or possess great activity; it is only sluggards and stupidities that can rest in a fool's paradise, or those who have been hypnotized and lulled into abnormal conditions. Hence we can see how it is that the man who has acquired the most wisdom, or truth, realizes the limitation of his faculties and acquisitions. Self-satisfaction are attributes of the ignorant mind; of the thoughtless and the credulous; of those whose minds were stultified in childhood by religious ideas which never fail to restrain and prevent natural mental action. It is generally considered wrong to stupefy the mind with drugs or liquor, that one may find relief from mental activity, but religious beliefs are only another result. Religious people are not thinkers; they are believers, and in belief they still the perturbations of the mind just as others soothe it with the opium pipe, hashish, wine or "strong drinks"—whose active principle is alcohol?

Mind being a property of matter it is affected by matter, and not a race or nation exists as far as we know, that has not found and does not use in some form exhilarating and stupefying products of Nature. The history of humanity cannot be separated from religious delusions and drunken orgies, while the priesthood was filling the ignorant rabble, the common herd with religious narcotics they were drunken with wine, and holding their own spirits of unrest in quiescence by the best the earth could produce in the way of food and drink. Nocturnal carousals have always been resorted to by the priesthood as a relief from satiety and ennui, and the pot bellies and rubicund features of those gentlemen to-day, reveal the fact they are no strangers to the good things of the table and the various brands of fire water that make

(Continued on Page 4.)